

vile and base men spiritual life if maintained at all would be at a very low ebb.

Some of the means God has provided for the development of the divine nature which the isolated Christian is deprived of. Union with God and his people tend to develop Christian character, and such union is an incentive to righteousness, and as they labor together "in the unity of the spirit, and in the bonds of peace," they contribute to their spiritual development, and their everlasting happiness. The isolated Christian is deprived of the regular preaching service. God has promised to meet with his children and bless them in his earthly sanctuary. David in expressing his joy for the church, said, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go unto the house of the Lord." "And his prayer was that peace would be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces." "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord." Oh how sweet to sit under the droopings of the sanctuary of God, and to enjoy the communion of God and his people, truly it is like the precious ointment upon the head, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. The experience of David has been that of all truly spiritually minded Christians, glad, yea, delighted to go to the house of the Lord. It is a gratification of the spiritual affections, and one of God's means of Grace. Then there is the prayer meeting which the isolated Christian is deprived of. In hearing others pray we also learn to pray, we imitate one another a good deal, all our desires, wants and needs are pretty much of the same nature, and by hearing others express their wants to God, we also learn to frame our words into a prayer, and thus supplicate the God of mercies, and if we continue instant or steadfastly in prayer, every little circumstance awakens in us disposition to pray. It is said that a prayerless Christian is a dead Christian.

It is said that a prayerless Christian is a dead Christian. That is dead spiritually; the love or fondness for the things of God has died. One who habitually neglects prayer cannot consistently be called a Christian. Prayer is essential to spiritual life; prayer is the medium thru which spiritual life is imparted. God is the source of all life, and if there be no communication with the source of life, there can be no spiritual life. Prayer keeps us in touch with God. The more we pray, the closer we get to God.

In the prayermeeting "the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above." There is a mutual feeling and sympathy for all of like mind, so that each affects and is affected for one another. What a blessed and happy condition of mind. It is a joint companionship, being firmly united in the bonds of Christian love. Dear isolated Christian, don't you long for such blessed companionship? In my isolated condition, I sincerely crave for the companionship of my brethren. Another means of grace which the isolated Christian is deprived of is the communion

service. Of all the religious services, the communion service is the most enjoyable, and contributes most to the development of the divine nature. The night on which our Lord was betrayed he instituted this heaven ordained service and he intended that it should be a perpetual memorial of him until he would come again. The wisdom of God knew that the children of men were of such a forgetful disposition that it was necessary to establish such an ordinance, so that we could keep in mind that great event, when he willingly offered himself a living sacrifice for the fallen race, and made atonement for the sins of the world, affecting a reconciliation between God and man. The Lord's supper affords an opportunity of drawing specially near to God, and of holding communion with God and his people. It strengthened the disciples for the approaching trials that awaited them. The breaking of the bread represents the sufferings of Jesus, the manner in which his body was broken, or wounded for sin. And it is a striking emblem designed to call to remembrance in a vivid manner the dying sufferings of our Lord.

The cup represents the blood of Christ, and is efficacious for the pardon of all sin, because it is the life of Jesus. Sacred writers represent it as life itself, or as containing the elements of spiritual life. Jesus said, "Whoso eateth my body, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Not a literal eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, but a spiritual eating, the bread being a significant emblem or symbol of his flesh and blood.

The highest exalted spiritual manhood attainable, is reached only thru God's divinely appointed means. It is impossible to grow in grace when deprived of the necessary means. Religious isolation has proved injurious to my spiritual development. I sometimes feel that spiritual life is decreasing instead of increasing, and that it is growing poorer instead of richer. Phillips Brooks says, "The high philosophy which gets its light from God, believes that life, as it moves deeper and deeper into God, must move from richness into richness always. O, believe that no man lives at his best to whom life is not becoming better and better." This is true not only philosophically but also religiously. If we are not developing, we must be retrograding. No middle ground to occupy; no such a condition as just holding your own spiritually. It is either growing better or becoming worse. I have said little about the discouragements of an isolated religious life. Discouragements there are many, but I don't want to be like Thomas the apostle who was inclined to look on the dark side of the picture. The encouragements that God gives us to be Christians under all circumstances and conditions of life, are infinitely greater than all the discouragements that we meet within the world. What we gain by being Christians under any conditions, is much greater than what we lose.

The great Apostle said he was willing to

"lose all things, that he might win Christ, and counted all things but refuse for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." After all it depends less on surroundings than on self. Some one has said, "No sunshine can scatter the gloom of a heart given to brooding, nor can any clouds depress the soul that is thankful. It makes little difference what you have and where you are, but counts much what you are." Nothing can stifle the cheerful, contented spirit. Godliness with contentment is great gain, this is the key to happiness and helps to make heaven. If there is one single soul here who is living in the entire absence of Christian fellowship, a solitary light in a dark place, if you would know how the flame of Christian love, when once lighted will burn on in the heart even thru the most adverse conditions, cling to your Bible which contains the oil that makes the lamp burn, and the fountain from which to drink.

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#### THE GREAT TRAGEDY.

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For a generation past no deed has startled and shocked the world as the assassination of our great and good president,—that a popular and amiable ruler, able, patriotic, a friend of the people, should without the least imaginable provocation be shot down by an unspeakable miscreant, a madman, an infinite fool, a friend in human form, who commits this awful crime for the notoriety it will give him.

It is another of those revelations of possible depths of iniquity which now and then startle those complacent people who indulge in platitudes about the essential divinity of human nature. In the midst of our self pleasing contemplation of the loftiness and dignity of man, some frightful shape leaps suddenly into the arena of universal observation, and in the sight of the world commits a devil's deed, a crime so black, so vast, so reeking with infinite wickedness, that nothing imaginable could make it worse. The Bible tells us of a bottomless pit, symbol not so much of unfathomable doom as of unfathomable wickedness. This awful fact in human nature stares us in the face, a thing of shuddering horror, a blackness of darkness, a profundity of ruin, which no language can adequately describe.

What other explanation can we devise for God's tremendous seriousness and earnestness in His dealings with human family? In view of the facts in human nature, its possibilities downward as well as upward, there is no marvel that God has exerted all his power, employed all His resources, in the working out of that divine purpose which is most commonly designated as the salvation of the race. That word salvation has apparently lost much of its proper force in our minds by much use and much familiarity. We have learned to repeat it glibly without measuring its height and depth, its length and its breadth. How vast the sweep